

Birds on a String

Illustrated by Helen D'souza

To a Red Kite

by Lilian Moore

Fling
yourself
upon the sky.

Take the string
you need.
Ride high,

high
above the park.
Tug and buck
and lark
with the wind.

Touch a cloud,
red kite.
Follow the wild geese
in their flight.



The Kite

by Helen Ball

If
my heart
were only a paper kite
I'd toss it high in the morning light
and let it fly, the giddy thing
till it touched the sky
then, bye and bye
I'd cut
the

s
t
r
i
n
g



Up, **U**p, and **A**way

Have you ever wished you could float up into the sky in a balloon? It looks so easy, but getting a huge hot-air balloon up in the air is a tricky job. A team of experienced people must fill an empty nylon bag with hot air without having it lift off before it should.

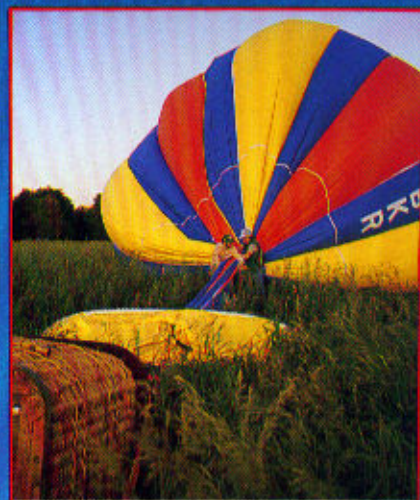
First, the balloon has to be carefully unpacked and laid flat. Then it has to be inflated two-thirds full of cold air. That's done by using a large fan. One person aims the fan while two or three hold open the throat of the balloon.

Next, a couple of the team members walk inside the balloon to check the seams for leaks. Once that's been done, they attach the basket. Some baskets hold one person, others are big enough for five or six.

Now comes the tricky part. The team makes one final safety check. Then the pilot turns on a powerful propane burner on top of the basket. When everyone is ready, he lights a "sparker." Fire shoots into the balloon.



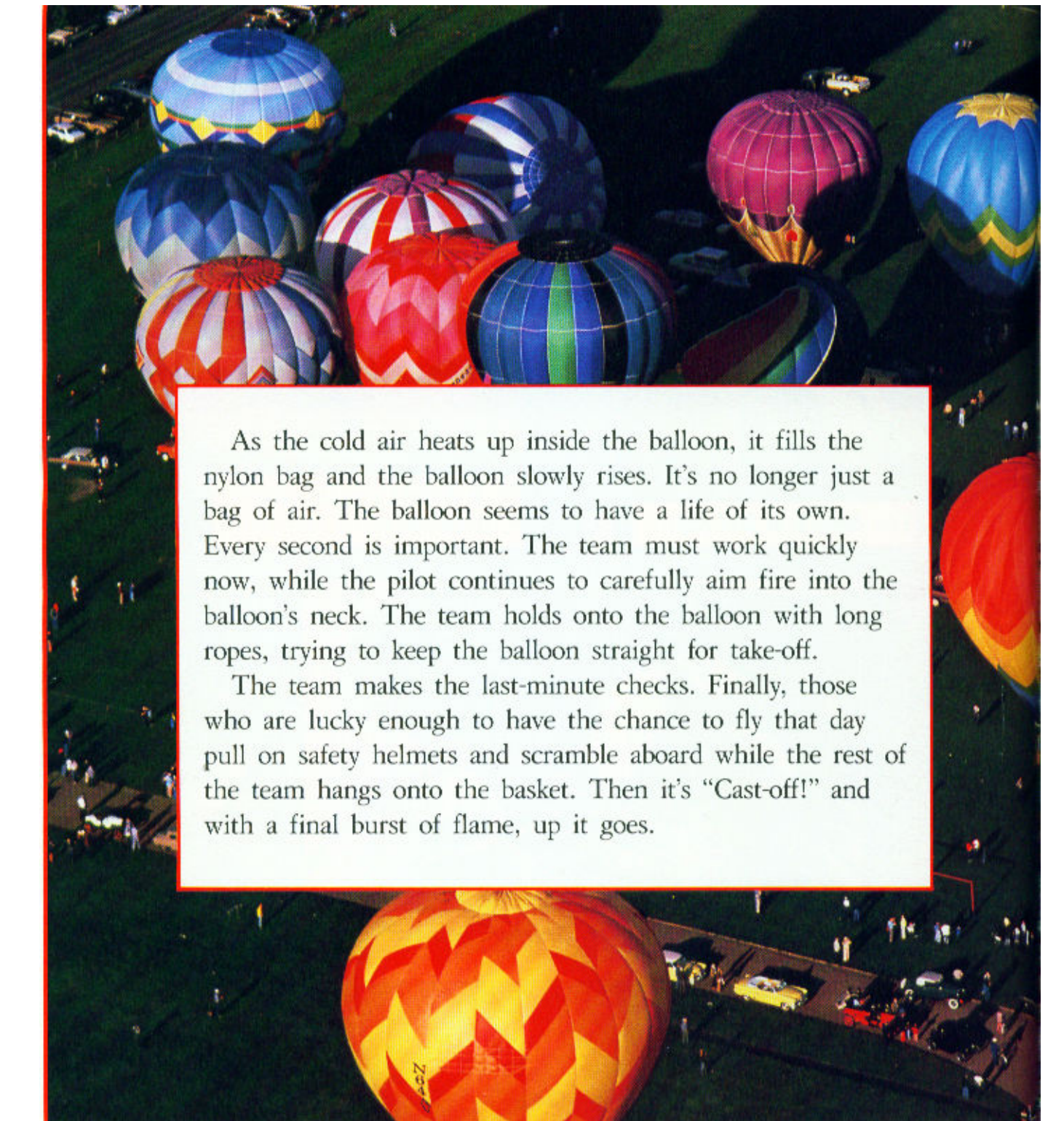
The balloon is laid flat.



It is partly filled with cold air.

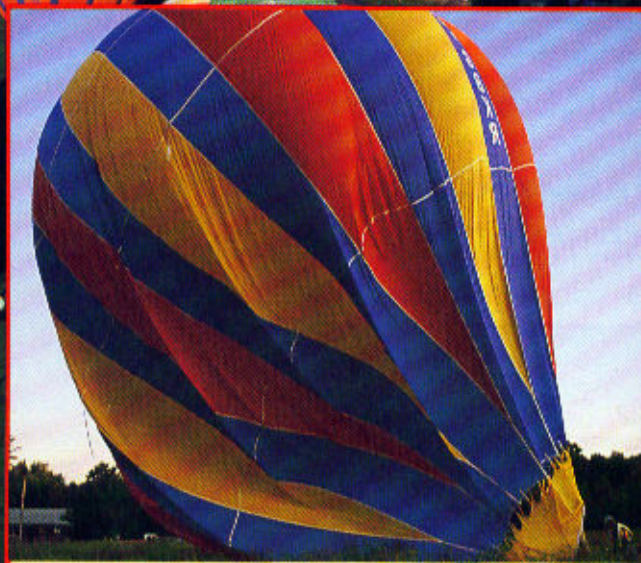


Fire shoots from the "sparker" into the balloon.



As the cold air heats up inside the balloon, it fills the nylon bag and the balloon slowly rises. It's no longer just a bag of air. The balloon seems to have a life of its own. Every second is important. The team must work quickly now, while the pilot continues to carefully aim fire into the balloon's neck. The team holds onto the balloon with long ropes, trying to keep the balloon straight for take-off.

The team makes the last-minute checks. Finally, those who are lucky enough to have the chance to fly that day pull on safety helmets and scramble aboard while the rest of the team hangs onto the basket. Then it's "Cast-off!" and with a final burst of flame, up it goes.



The cold air beats up; the balloon begins to rise.



Up, up, and away!